

MONTANA

Wildlife

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Meet Your Commissioner

Edwin G. Leipheimer, Jr., well known businessman of Butte, Montana is the newest member of Montana's five-man Fish & Game Commission. Mr. Leipheimer was appointed during March, 1960 by Governor J. Hugo Aronson. His district includes Deer Lodge, Silver Bow, Beaverhead, Madison, Jefferson, Broadwater, Gallatin, Park, and Sweet Grass counties.

A native of Butte, he is a graduate of Butte High School and attended the Montana School of Mines for one year and Montana State University at Missoula for two years. He is a member of Phi Delta Theta fraternity and also the Masonic and Shrine lodges of Butte. In addition, he is a member of the Skyline Sportsmen Club, the Jesters and the National Snoplane Association. Mr. Leipheimer also serves on the Butte-Silver Bow city-county planning board. He and his wife, Dorothy, and their four children reside in Butte. Mr. Leipheimer owns and operates the Floral Park Service Station.

Other members of the commission are John T. Hanson, Sr., of Malta, H. W. Black of Polson (chairman), Ralph D. Shipley of Miles City and Edward J. Skibby of Lewistown.

WILDLIFE AND PARKS

GUEST EDITORIAL—BY R. YORK EDWARDS, GAME BIOLOGIST

Department of Recreation and Conservation, Vancouver, B. C.

Reprinted from "Wildlife Review"

One hot day in one of our larger parks, I was relaxing on the roadside when a long car stopped beside me. "How far to the park?" came a voice from behind the sunglasses and big cigar. "This is it," I said, "in fact you've nearly driven through it." "But we haven't seen anything yet," he complained and, with an impatient wave of his hand, swept aside my mention of a quiet lake with trout rings widening on it; a knoll where foxes sang a weird song every night; a glade where deer grazed at dusk; a range of hills clothed with cool, green forests and a series of lovely waterfalls.

He wanted to know where the animals were. I told him they were everywhere but they were difficult to see at 60 m.p.h. "Should have 'em in cages," and he roared away after I had suggested that this was a different kind of park. That afternoon I saw seven bear-trees, fell off two beaver dams, was attacked by a maternal grouse, and was serenaded by a wolf duet as I plodded for camp.

Not everyone appreciates what wildlife is to large parks. Perhaps some explanation of wildlife aims in our provincial parks would be in order.

Wildlife is one of the important resources contained in parks around the world. Many were created because of the wildlife they possessed. Many parks have received most of

their fame from the animals and birds they preserve. Parks and wildlife go together.

The basic philosophy behind many parks is the preservation of natural contents as a setting for outdoor recreation. This concept has wide geographical appeal and powerful public support. Such public interest alone is ample demonstration of the value of the park concept.

Park use is a resource unique among resources, in theory at least. It is not renewable or non-renewable. It is self-perpetuating with a value that never diminishes, even temporarily, but rather increases with every year, as the surrounding areas move farther and farther from their natural state.

All this is clear-cut in theory, but in practice there has to be some management. Fires, despite the fact that some are quite natural, must be suppressed. People need unnatural conveniences and may trample some sections of parks into quite unnatural little dust bowls.

Animals, too, need some management. Some parks, famed for their wildlife, are losing it. Others have suddenly found that they have too many animals. Not so many years ago people created game reserves with great abandon and seemed to think some magic went with the term. Many of our game reserves today hold less game than adjacent areas.

Land that used to hold game may have seen forest changes that have crowded it out. A preserve, park or otherwise, cannot lead to game increases unless there is range to support it. The explosive game increases in some parks are just as serious. Ruined forests and grasslands, eroding soils, and game herds eating themselves out of existence, are common trends in many parks because of too many animals.

Abundant game in parks needs good range which may need perpetuation through management, and control may be necessary to balance animal numbers with the range. This is one reason for wildlife management in parks and most park systems are forced to use it. Our provincial system is one of the few which recognized its importance from the start.

This is not the only way in which the wildlife policy of our parks is unique. In some of our parks hunting may be encouraged as a legitimate form of outdoor recreation. In most parks of the world fishing is encouraged but hunting is illegal.

This is a bit inconsistent. In those British Columbia parks where hunting does not conflict with other uses, game populations may be managed for hunters. This management aims at annually harvesting the annual herd increase, so that game stocks are never impaired. Since many game populations normally increase up to 25% per annum, or more, the harvest value of game is remarkably high as compared to many renewable resources. The Parks Division is undertaking this second type of wildlife management, with most effort placed upon Wells Gray Park.

British Columbia is world famous for its scenery, vegetations, and wild animals. Our parks present typical fragments of the Province to all who are interested. Since wildlife is a part of British Columbia's fame, its management is a part of managing our parks.

Cages will not do—for the same reason that a tagged yellow pine in Kew Gardens gives no idea of the sweeping rangelands that this species represents.



MONTANA NEEDS MORE BEAR HUNTERS

By Glen Cole, Big Game Research Supervisor

Over most of the nation, black bears are considered a prize by any hunter. In Montana, too, bruin is a game animal, but for some reason has never gained a deserving stature with resident hunters. Since the Montana Fish and Game Department is responsible for the management of the state's game resources, they are concerned with this part of recreational hunting that is going down the drain. Accordingly, considerable time and effort has been expended toward developing a sound bear management program.

Through department investigations, many important details of black bears have been uncovered. One of the most common questions to be given light is their significance as livestock predators. Questionnaires sent to 22% of all Montana

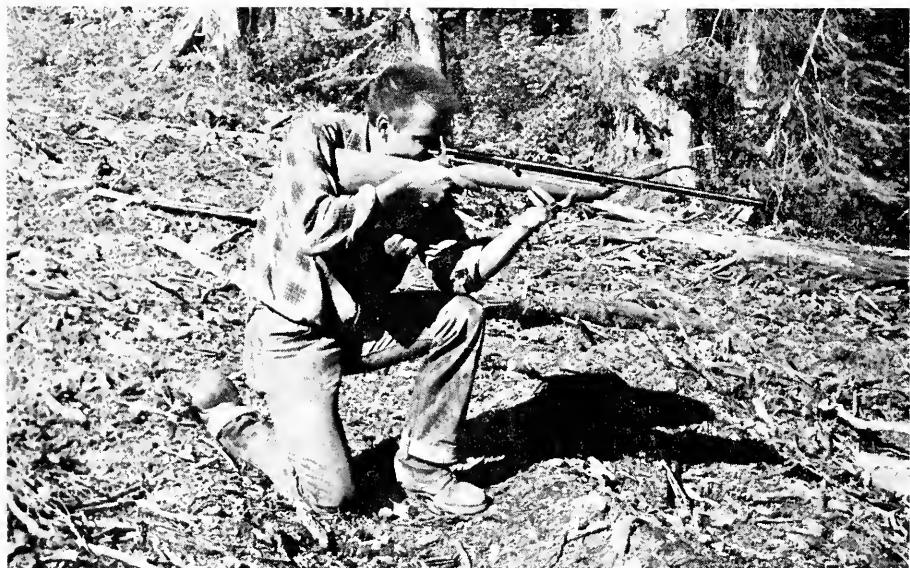
farm and ranch units revealed that bears were considered responsible for the loss of about 500 cattle and 5,000 sheep during 1957. In order to get more positive information, 90 cases that reported livestock losses were followed up by personal interviews. The interviews disclosed that the depredation figures were somewhat exaggerated, for livestock which died from other causes were frequently mistaken for bear kills. Bears were blamed because they had been seen feeding upon the carcasses. Out of the 90 cases investigated, only 4 out of 16 reported cattle losses and 66 of 74 reported sheep losses could be attributed to bears.

Despite the fact that relatively few bears are stock killers, livestock losses can be quite a financial blow to individual operators. However,

such losses appear to reach significant proportions only when bruin is contending with a shortage of natural food. It follows that the destruction of individual "killer bears" is treating the symptom rather than the illness. As with other big game animals, a long-term solution calls for keeping bear numbers in balance with their natural food supply.

Research on bears is still continuing. In one particular area of west-

ern Montana, quite an intensive study is under way. Here bears are being captured alive and put to sleep with a chemically loaded dart. While in slumberland the bears are weighed, various measurements are taken, then they are tagged with bright markers. Upon waking, the bears waddle away a little drowsy but none the worse from their experience. To date some 80 have been tagged.



Charles Jonkel uses a dart gun to immobilize a trapped bear.

—Photo by B. J. Rose

Information gained from this and associated projects are rewarding the department with sound and sorely needed information. Our data agree that black bears in the wild are mainly vegetarians. Our study shows somewhat over 95% of their food is vegetable. Berries, pine nuts, forbs and grasses are major food items. Carrion is eaten when found.

On the 80 square mile study area, representative of western bear country, there were actually 1.25 animals per square mile (about 100 on the 80 square mile area). This is a large number of bears. Much of western Montana, in fact, is good bear country and is substantially populated with this fine game species. Bear numbers in many areas appear to



Still groggy from drugs a tagged bear begins to wake up.

—Photo by B. J. Rose

be too high for their own good, and trophy size animals are not maintained. The yearlings seem to suffer most when pickings are poor, and many don't make the winters. Here are the places where we have trouble, for during lean years bears become nuisances around human habitations.

Even where bears are numerous, surprisingly few are taken by Montana hunters. In 1959 about 1,400 were taken state-wide. Only 5 of 80 marked bears on a western Montana study area were killed by hunt-

ers during the last two years, despite publicity aimed to get hunters into that area.

The department recognizes that in many parts of the state we just aren't shooting enough bears to keep their numbers within desired limits. Younger animals lose out in competition for food, and we are consequently raising inferior, small-sized bears. Severe competition is also forcing some bears to become nuisances, and in cases, stock killers. Several things can be done to help solve this problem. Following are some important objectives:

- Seasons and bag limits should be set by area as they are on other big game. This would permit corrective seasons in problem areas.

- Regulations should permit the taking of cubs, or females with cubs, after September 15. Black bear cubs are able to take care of themselves when about 5½ months old. Additionally, such a regulation would aid law enforcement. Problems arise in the fall when it's difficult to tell large cubs from yearlings.
- Issuance of special non-resident licenses for black bears would help put hunting pressure in areas where bears are numerous and not adequately harvested by residents. The \$20 license would be restricted to problem areas.
- Classification of blacks as trophy (instead of game) animals would put them in the same classification as grizzlies. This would permit hunters to take black bears for their hides alone. They would not have to use the meat unless they want to.

The two latter objectives will be recommended to the 1961 legislature for their consideration. The department feels that such laws would be a big step forward in solving our bear problems. Our black bears have the potential of a valuable recreational resource. Under good man-

agement both hunters and bears would benefit, and the blacks would be recognized as the fine game animals they are.

The department is anxious to better its public services and will appreciate public support for this program.



Even small fry enjoy a brisk day on the ice.

It's Time To Go Fishing

For the majority of sportsmen, gunning season has come to an end. Rifles are being hung up and tackle is coming out—for it's time to go fishing again.

Montana offers a diversity of winter fishing. In fact, nearly any part of the state provides some kind. Trout, whitefish, perch and ling are the most popular fish this time of year. And you don't have to be the rugged type to enjoy it—you just have to be prepared. An exhilarating day on the ice will convert even the confirmed house plant to ranks of the 'red-nosed' who are at their best in old man winter's deep freeze.

If you are not a veteran winter fisherman, then special attention should be given to preparation for

your outing. Personal warmth and comfort must be given top priority; plenty of good warm clothing is a must. For maximum warmth, clothing must fit loosely and outside garments should be wind-proof. Insulated clothing now on the market is very efficient. It is warm, yet light-weight. Wear a good cap that will protect both your head and ears. Gloves also must fit loosely. Inner liners are added protection against the cold, so take along an extra pair in case one becomes wet from handling fish and fish lines. An otherwise enjoyable trip can be miserable if your feet are cold, so wear good footgear, preferably with some type of inner-lining or inner-soles. A tarp to stand or kneel upon can also

be a big help in keeping feet warm. A word of caution, however, don't bundle up so snugly that you will perspire enroute to the fishing area. Dampness greatly reduces the insulating quality of any clothing.

The next item to consider is fishing equipment. This need not be expensive nor extravagant. If you intend to fish through the ice, a tool for chipping holes will be an important item. Axes and picks are both dangerous for cutting ice and also ineffective. A wide chisel welded to a $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 5' piece of pipe is a very acceptable chopper. These are called 'ice-spuds.' Put a rope or thong on the handle so the spud will not wind up on a lake bottom. It's easy for one to slip away on the first ice break-through. A soup skimmer or a piece of coarse mesh screen is handy for dipping chipped ice and slush from the fishing holes.

For fishing through the ice a long pole is useless; in fact, the recommended length is not over three feet. Telescoping rods, tips of fly rods, or any such devices are suitable for ice fishing. Fishing in open water is another story. Here, long cane poles are popular. Cane poles afford a latitude of distance and some action without the frustration of frozen guides.

Commercially manufactured poles are made specifically for ice fishing. Many are nothing more than short wooden poles with large line guides and some provision for holding extra line. Non-absorbent line has less

chance to hold water and freeze. The line should be heavy enough to resist cutting by jagged ice and to take the weight of fish as they are hoisted from the water.

Include a light bobber in the tackle box along with a supply of sinkers. Bell-type sinkers are popular with lake and pond fishermen. A box secured to a child's sled provides an excellent vehicle for carrying equipment.

Bait will vary with the kind of fish you're after. Maggots, worms and sucker meat are dependable for perch. Whitefish and trout will go for maggots, worms, and the popular stone fly nymphs (commonly called scratchers or hellgrammites). Scratchers can be easily collected with a window screen having wooden handles tacked on two sides. While holding one end of the handles, spread the screen and prop the opposite handle ends upon a stream bottom. Now have someone roll the rocks and gravel immediately upstream. Scratchers will drift against the screen and may be easily collected. The small, light-colored ones produce best results.

Ling feed almost entirely upon other fishes. Live bait then is imperative. In Montana, *cottus* (commonly called sculpins) are the only live fish that may be used for bait statewide. Regulations allow use of other kinds in some eastern Montana areas. Be sure to check current regulations to determine what is allowed in your area.



An elephant could fall through a hole of this size. Keep fishing holes SMALL for safety.

Yellow Perch

Now with equipment loaded and a thermos of hot coffee handy, let's head for the lake to catch some perch. Ten a.m. to four p.m. are the most productive hours for perch. Don't expect perch to give the thrill of fighting trout in July. They're not that kind of fish, but perch taken from winter waters are firm and tasty. You'll find that trout aren't the same as they are in July either. Cold water slows them down to almost a lethargic condition.

Perch are not classed as game fish in Montana so there is no limit as to the numbers one can take.

While perch fishing you may hook trout also. Be certain to check your fishing regulations for open waters and creel limits.

Once in the fishing area, your next step is to make certain the ice is safe. Don't bunch up and put concentrated weight on small ice areas. Avoid ice over swift water, around stumps or other projections, and above springs. Sunken areas often indicate underlying springs and thin ice. Be cautious also of cracks and holes which may have been previously opened by fishermen. Early spring ice presents special hazards of rotten ice and weak areas created by fluctuating water levels.

Finding a good fishing spot may present a problem on unfamiliar waters. Good bets for perch are in deep waters off rocky points, sandy bars, or mainland areas that protrude into the lake. Tell-tale bait, blood spots, wood ashes and fishing holes are evidence of successful fishing spots. Dig a series of holes small enough so that other fishermen, and children especially, cannot fall bodily into the water. Perch congregate in schools and where one is caught, others are nearby. If one hole does not provide fish, try another. Sometimes movement of only a few feet will mean the difference between a good catch or no fish at all.

Put a sinker on the end of your line and tie on the first hook so it will rest near the lake or pond bottom. The second hook should be tied about a foot higher. A light float is an advantage when fish are biting daintily. Jiggling the bait up and down will often attract fish. If you are unsuccessful fishing near the bottom, try different levels.

Whitefish

The feeding habits of whitefish, like perch, are not greatly affected by cold water. Most of our other fishes are slowed down and feed less; consequently, whitefish provide a large part of Montana's winter fishery.

In the rivers, whitefish congregate or 'school' where fast water blends into slower moving water along the shore and at the foot of rapids or riffles. The larger ones are generally found in the deeper water.

When fishing through the ice, the same equipment used for perch fishing is suitable. Whitefish have small mouths, so No. 10 or No. 12 short-shanked hooks are most effective. It is imperative that small hooks be used, otherwise you may go home empty-handed. Keep the bait moving up and down.

Open water fishing requires different equipment. Here, the short pole is replaced by a long one. Cane poles, either jointed or in single units, are quite effective. Equip them with $\frac{1}{2}$ " or larger guides made from fine stiff wire. A reel, spool, or wooden brackets should be attached to the pole for storage of excess line. Again, a fairly heavy line that will not absorb water is required.

The most effective whitefishing method in open water is to cast into the lower end of a riffle and allow the bait to drift along the edge of the fast water into a pool. When streams carry floating ice, whitefish may be taken near the stream edges and beneath shelf-ice. Adjust a bobber or float on the line so the bait drifts near the stream bottom. When a whitefish strikes it should be allowed to pull the float beneath the water surface before the hook is set.

Ling

The slick eel-like ling are fresh water members of the codfish family. In Montana, ling are found principally in the Kootenai, Missouri and lower Yellowstone River drainages. In rivers they seem to prefer the smoother waters and show prefer-



With an ice shack one may fish in comfort on even the most bitter days.

ence for deep waters in lakes, except during spawning. Specimens have been known to reach lengths in excess of three feet and weights of over 24 pounds. But don't expect to be pulling out whoppers of this size.

When cooked, ling flesh is flaky, snowy-white and delicious.

Ling are most active at night usually hiding in the shelter of stones during the daytime. At night they forage the streams in search of other fish. Although fish are their main stay, some other animal life is also eaten.

Considering the food habits of ling, live fish are about the only effective bait. Montana law limits live fish bait to *cottus*, (locally called sculpins) in most of the state. This law is to prevent contaminating areas with undesirable fish. Other kinds may be used in parts of eastern Montana. Check current fishing regulations to determine what bait may be used in the area where you intend to fish. Montana law also limits hours of fishing, except set line fishing. Consequently, ling fishing is essentially limited to set line fishing with *cottus* for bait. Present regulations limit one fishermen to no more than six lines. No single line may contain more than six hooks. Be certain to consult current fishing regulations for waters open to set line fishing.

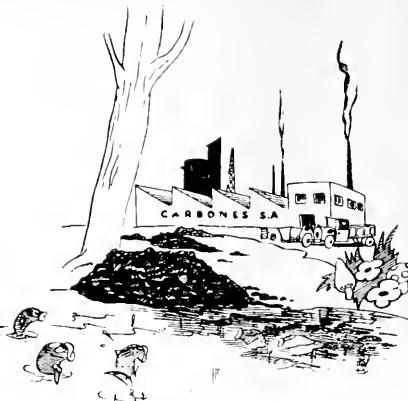
No need to sit around the house and dream of the big ones you caught last summer. If you haven't tried winter fishing—this is your chance. Maybe the wife is bored, so take her along. You'll find company on the lake or river. There's good sport waiting and some good eating too.

It's a Small World

The time-worn cliche' "It's a small world" seems still to apply, even in the field of fisheries management.

Following are some cartoons which appear in "The Pesca Fluvial." This leaflet, originating in Madrid, Spain, shows a remarkable parallel between fisheries problems of that country and our own.

Accompanying captions have not been included. The illustrations very ably carry the messages.



Water pollution.

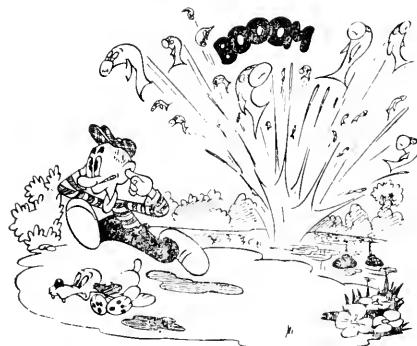
DRAWINGS BY PEDRO MARTIN



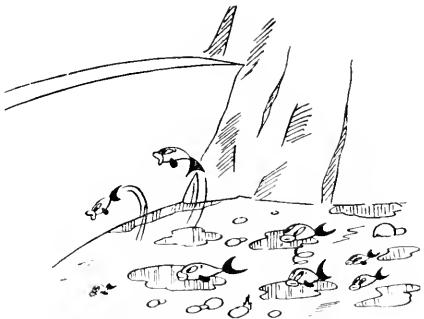
Habitat loss through stream channel work.



Stream obstructions.



The Poacher.



Dewatering of streams.



Crime doesn't pay.



The Madison-Wall Creek Winter Elk Range Acquisition

R. F. COONEY—CHIEF OF GAME MANAGEMENT

The recent purchase of the Holt Ranch by the Montana Fish and Game Commission has made the Madison-Wall Creek winter elk range a reality. This area of somewhat over 5,000 acres lies adjacent to the Gravelly Range on the west side of the Madison Valley above Cameron.

For many years an important part of the Gravelly Range elk herd has drifted into this area to winter. Extended seasons have been necessary to hold the elk down in order to prevent serious damage to private property. Last winter up to 250 elk were seen in this area. This is the largest number that has been observed there

in several years. In addition, a concentration of mule deer has also presented a range problem in this area since the early '40's. Antelope have more recently moved up the valley in this vicinity. In addition to distinct benefits to big game, the new game range presents ready access to approximately six miles of the Madison River for fishermen.

The Gravelly Range in southwestern Montana has long played a vital role in the maintenance and development of a very important livestock economy. In recent years, game has materially increased in numbers and importance throughout this same area. Careful management of both



of these important resources has been necessary in order that conflicts could be avoided. In this regard, the acquisition of the Holt Ranch area presents an important step in insuring the future enjoyment of the big game and fisheries resources in harmony with other important uses of the land.

Prior to this purchase it was becoming increasingly evident that without the acquisition of a range for wintering game, there would be little opportunity to maintain the numbers presently in the area and that reductions of game might well be necessary. It is expected that the purchase of the Madison-Wall Creek unit will go a long way in solving this problem. Big game will tend to concentrate on the newly acquired winter range, thus relieving adjoining private lands of serious game use.

Plans for future numbers of elk and other big game species in this area will be based on the available forage supply and in consideration with the over-all multiple use program for the Gravelly Range unit. Other important recreational assets, including public hunting, fishing and camping, will be given careful consideration in this plan and will add materially to the benefits that will result from the area.

As with the several other winter game ranges acquired in key locations during the past years, funds in lieu of taxes will be paid annually by the Montana Fish and Game Commission to the county. The amount will be determined by the County Assessor and will be comparable to that paid by adjoining private landholders on similar types of property.



This mourning dove will wear a metal tag throughout its life. The tag will provide valuable management information.

—Photo by courtesy of Texas Game and Fish Commission

THE MOURNING DOVE AS A GAME BIRD

Montana, like other states, is faced with the situation of diminishing game bird habitat while at the same time the numbers of hunters are increasing. On the other hand, we are passing by some of the best wing shooting to be found—this is hunting for mourning doves.

During late March and early April, mourning doves wing into Montana by the hundreds of thousands. Here they find ideal nesting conditions and from May to August their energies are turned to rearing young. In

September and early October the doves flock together; then, impelled by some age-old force they begin their annual flight to the south.

The birds drift leisurely through Montana hardly noticed, but in thirty other states hunters anxiously await opening of the dove season. The small gray birds are swift, erratic flyers—no lumbering, easy target. Women, men and youngsters take to the fields to test their skill. So exciting is the sport that doves top the list, in numbers, as the prized game

species in many states. Despite the pressures, doves are not only holding their own but are increasing over much of the country.

What is the secret of the dove? How can it continue to prosper in the face of increased hunting pressure and land use? Actually, there are several factors in the doves' favor.

Of no small importance is the doves' potential for reproduction. They are adaptable and persistent nesters. From nearly the time they arrive in Montana until well into August, doves devote most of their time to replenishing their numbers. Each clutch averages only two eggs, but this bird wastes no time in rearing a second, third and even a fourth brood. The young of one clutch are scarcely able to fly before eggs are laid for another. Young of a brood are often cared for by one parent while the other parent incubates new eggs. This repeated nesting of small clutches gives doves an advantage over other game birds. Periods of bad spring weather do not cut into a large portion of the entire season's production.

Doves are also adaptable to a wide variety of nesting conditions. They will nest in trees, shrubs, on the ground, and even on rock ledges. Thus, their potential to increase is not apt to be curtailed greatly by changing conditions.

Another factor to the benefit of doves is the harmony between their food habits and changing land use. Doves are seed eaters and seldom take insects; consequently, most agriculture tends to fill the dove larder.



In many states doves are number one game bird.

—Photo by Don Wooldridge, Missouri Conservation Commission.

Waste grain and weedy edges of grain fields provide their supermarkets. Any change from grassland to more weedy types provides more food. In cases, even overgrazing may encourage weed growth.

An additional lift has been given doves by more water sources. Through more arid Montana, construction of countless stock-water ponds has opened new areas or improved conditions for them.

While considering how the hunter affects the welfare of these birds, one must keep in mind an important point. That is that doves, like other birds which have a great potential for rapidly increasing their numbers, are relatively short-lived. Every year about 70% of all doves are lost through natural causes. Such factors as disease, predation, accidents, and weather all take their annual toll. Bear in mind that this loss is suffered whether the birds are hunted or not—it is the way of nature. When one factor takes a large number, other factors become less efficient. Where doves are hunted, the hunter take is a part of, not an addition to, the normal 70% loss. The hunter factor becomes a substitute for natural causes which constantly operate to keep doves in check.

Hunters, however, are poor competitors with nature. For example, California hunters account for only about 4% of the annual dove losses in spite of the fact that 3½ million of these birds were harvested there during 1959. Natural forces accounted for the other 66%.

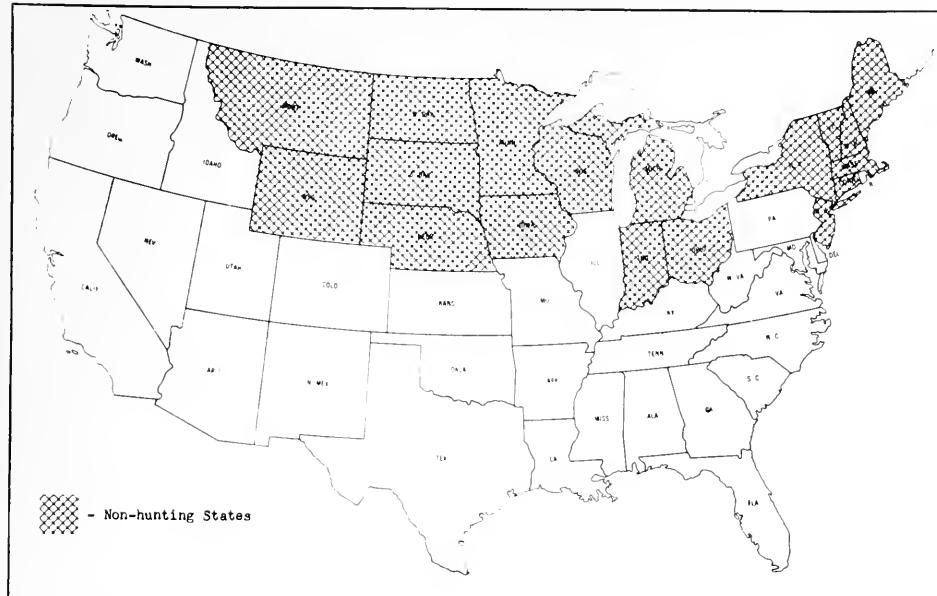


Doves nest repeatedly each season.
—Photo by Charles Schwartz, Missouri Conservation Committee

Since it is evident that Montana hunters would have little effect on our dove population, let's consider some advantages of putting doves on the game bird list.

From a game management standpoint, it would be wise use of an otherwise wasted resource. From the sportsmen's viewpoint, exhilarating hunting would be offered at a time when little is available otherwise. The colorful days of early September are naturals for lady hunters and for teaching the youngsters how to wing shoot. These hunts can be leisurely, family affairs, for by nature dove hunting is not strenuous.

Parts of western Montana have good numbers of mourning doves, but the entire eastern two-thirds of our state is dove country. Accordingly, wing shooting would be offered to many Montanans who now have less chance for this kind of



COMPILED IN THE BRANCH OF ENG. S.G.

sport. Much of the more isolated Montana—which includes a lot of public land—is excellent dove country. Conflict there with agricultural activities would be minimum.

Since no figures are available, one can only speculate on how many doves would be taken annually in Montana. One thing for certain, the harvest would increase as hunters discovered the fun in this sport. Examples might indicate what we could expect to take. During 1958 Idaho hunters took 144,000, in Colorado 152,000 were harvested and in sparsely populated Nevada the take was 90,000 birds. During 1958 Montana hunters took a total of 442,000 game birds—all species combined.

Doves are migratory birds. This puts them under jurisdiction of the U. S. Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife. This agency sets dove seasons and bag limits in much the

same manner as they regulate hunting of ducks and geese. Studies for the management of doves are conducted by the bureau in cooperation with individual states. During 1959, effort equivalent to 24 full-time men was directed toward gathering information needed for better management of this game species.

Two years ago your Fish and Game Department recommended to the legislature that doves be placed on the Montana game bird list. Management-wise it is biologically sound.

The department would be negligent if they did not attempt to provide all recreational hunting possible to Montana sportsmen. Whether or not we will be able to join the other 30 states now hunting doves will depend largely upon the interest shown by outdoorsmen and the support or lack of support sportsmen give to proposed legislation.

Montana Game Wardens are Friendly

By Gene Sherman, District Warden Supervisor

When the telephone rings at two o'clock in the morning and a gruff voice demands "Is this the game warden?" It isn't always easy to be pleasant, but we try.

The fellow who called may have hit a deer with his car and wanted to inquire what to do about it. A reply that the warden will come right out and help him seems to bring a welcome response, despite the bad luck which has befallen him.

Perhaps the fellow has lost his license and wants to go hunting in the morning, or he wants to know if the elk are coming out at Gardiner.

A few days ago the phone rang at 11:00 p. m. "I want to go fishing in Canyon Ferry Lake tomorrow and I need a boat license. Can I get one tonight?" the voice inquired. To make a long story short, he got one and I expect soon was fast asleep—dreaming of the big ones he'd catch tomorrow.

I was still wondering what he'd been doing all week that he didn't have time to get a license in the day-time instead of getting me out of bed just after I'd fallen asleep.

Typical calls such as these do come in at all hours and we try to be cheerful and consider it as just a part of the job.

A large part of a game warden's work is contacting the public and, of course, checking to see if the Fish & Game laws are being adhered to by the public. Sportsmen clamor for

more game wardens instead of less; mind you, not to keep an eye on them, but to watch the other fellow—the out-of-towner or the out-of-stater. The sportsmen argue in the interest of our hunting and fishing that we need a game warden in our community.

Whether you are one of these sportsmen who like game wardens or not, remember, he has been hired to do a job because people like you who hunt and fish insist that he be among you and on the job—not to check on you of course but the other fellow who lives on the other side of town.

Game wardens have been on the job both in Europe and the United States for several centuries. Their job at first was primarily that of a game protector. The game warden still on the job now has a much more complicated role. Law enforcement is only part of his job. He has learned to help manage our wildlife resources more wisely, keeping pace with the changing times.

While law enforcement is only part of a warden's job, it is a basic function of any Fish and Game Department. Without laws and their enforcement, it would be highly improbable that any management practice would see the break of day because there would be nothing to manage. Nearly all Fish and Game Departments—and Montana is no



Jack Thompson (deceased) and Leonard Secor greet each other in the field.
Warden contacts create important public impressions.

—Photo by author

exception—are financed by the sale of hunting and fishing licenses. The warden who checks your license helps make it possible for your Fish and Game Department to operate. The game warden is perhaps your only contact with the Fish and Game Department and the impression he leaves reflects the over-all job the Fish and Game Department is doing for you.

Montana encompasses an area of 147,138 square miles. The State Fish and Game Department employs 50 game wardens to work with the people of this state. This gives an average size district of nearly 3,000 square miles per warden. It is no wonder then that you go on many hunting trips and many fishing trips without seeing a game warden.

During the past several years, I have contacted many sportsmen who

said—"You are the first warden who asked to see my license." These were important contacts to me and the sportsman often seemed to be glad that I had stopped to check his license.

As previously mentioned, the job of game warden encompasses much more than law enforcement and license checking. In the local community the game warden is the contact man for the Fish and Game Department. He deals with nearly every phase of the department's responsibility to the public. People come to him for information concerning the department's activities. A well-informed, friendly game warden creates good will for the Fish and Game Department.

When game seasons are set, the game warden plays an important part because of his familiarity with

population trend surveys and range work. He has also been very close to ranchers' problems, including game damage and other problems of complicated range use. He is also aware of the public reaction in the community regarding the type of hunting season sportsmen would prefer. This information plays an important role in the final setting of seasons. The game warden takes creel census from the many miles of fishing streams and lakes. This information plays an important role in the proper fish management and the final season setting to gain the best possible fish harvest for the sportsman.

Game wardens attend meetings

with the public, sportsmen, cooperating agencies and ranchers to work out a satisfactory pattern of land use which would be beneficial to the fish and wildlife resources. Such jobs as granting beaver permits, inspecting fish pond and game farm permits, checking boats for licenses and life-saving equipment, conducting hunter safety classes for the young prospective sportsman are all in day's work for the game warden.

So, if you like to hunt and fish or if you're just interested in the wildlife and out-of-doors, call up the warden. Stop by and see him. He will be glad to answer your questions and help you. Montana game wardens are friendly.

Field Notes

WILD FISH BOUNCE BACK

By Jack Bailey, Hatchery Biologist

During the 1959 spring census, catchable-size game fish were removed from the study area in Flint Creek, Granite County. Enough fish were removed to reduce the total weight of fish in the study area from 486 pounds to 238 pounds. The carrying capacity of the area is believed to be 460 to 500 pounds per mile.

No hatchery fish were planted, so the return to carrying capacity was accomplished by natural growth and recruitment. This amounted to full recovery from 50% exploitation within a matter of 12 months.

In Flint Creek the recovery would be roughly 1,200 catchable game fish or 120 creel limits per mile of stream. This would provide 1,200 man-hours of good fishing (1.0 fish per hour) or 300 successful fisherman days per mile—per year. Such information will be useful in assessing the values of our streams presently endangered by pollution and physical destruction.



Uniquely sculptured, the Missouri River Breaks is among the best deer country.

—Photo by H. Max Stone

ROUGH COUNTRY DEER

By H. Max Stone, Information-Education Representative

In northeastern Montana there's rugged country along the Missouri River that boasts some of the best deer hunting in the entire west. These are the breaks, or badlands, one-time home of Chief Sitting Bull. The now sparsely settled breaks were once the center of vast livestock operations and the terminus for Texas trail herds that found lush summer pasture in the coulees. The plains grizzly, elk and bighorn sheep, long since driven westward by civilization, roamed the sharp cuts and weird rock formations.

Century upon century the winds and water have chiseled away highlands leaving a uniquely sculptured

terrain. Plant and animal life here is also spectacular and divergent. On the higher benches, horned toads, rattlesnakes and jackrabbits live among the prickly pear, yucca and silver sage. Not far distant, Douglas fir, Ponderosa pine, wild strawberry and low huckleberry offer food and shelter for porcupines, chickadees, nut-hatches and Canada jays.

Deer, antelope and elk live in the rough country. Hunters willing to follow steep, winding trails can find them. Big mule deer with "hat-rack" antlers are synonymous with the Missouri badlands.

In the heart of the breaks the Fort



Biologists keep tabs on range transects throughout the breaks. Use on key plant species reflects range condition.

—Photo by H. Max Stone

Peck Game Range offers almost a million acres of excellent game country. This large area is accessible by boat. Camping and hunting parties that enter by boat have the advantage of getting into places not accessible by wheeled vehicles. Ask any hunter who has used a boat for his hunting steed and he will vouch that there is nothing more interesting for this sport. Each year sees more hunters using boats to get them to the heart of the mule deer country. Those not marine-minded can still use wheeled vehicles and/or horses to get to their favorite haunts. Four-wheeled drives are necessary in many places although conventional vehicles can come within striking range of good hunting.

Deer are not the only game animals that roam the rough country. In 1951, elk were introduced in the breaks and in 1957, the first elk season was opened. At this time, 22 branch-antlered bull permits were issued and 19 animals were taken. Annually, special elk permits have since been issued there. This past season 20 antlerless, 20 antlered and 10 branch-antlered bull permits were issued—hunters accounted for 41 animals.

The department also has a plan in action to reestablish mountain sheep in this historical sheep range. Some have already been released. Another band is now enclosed in a 2,000 acre pasture. As the sheep multiply here and become more or less

accustomed to the area they will be released in bands. Perhaps hunters may someday also have a chance for sheep in this exceptional country. Each year the breaks are providing more and more hunting and more and more deer are taken. While figures on the past season are unavailable, they are expected to exceed previous years for number of deer harvested and number of hunters in the breaks. High-quality recreation is afforded those hunters who would combine the smell of their camp-fire smoke with scenery and surroundings unique to the rough country deer.



Big mule deer with hat rack antlers are synonymous with the breaks.

—Photo by H. Max Stone

Field Notes

COTTUS MAY REFLECT STREAM CONDITION

Jack Heaton, Leader, Fisheries Laboratory Project

It appears that the range of the cottus has moved upstream in the Yellowstone River. In discussing the excellent brown trout fishing above Livingston, Dan Bailey observed that there were cottus in the upper river where a few years ago none were observed. This month I examined four brown trout stomachs from fish near Wanigan and found that three of them contained a cottus. In screening for bait last spring I took cottus frequently at the Pine Creek Bridge and a few miles upstream. Dr. Brown said he had attempted to collect cottus from the upper river without success in the past.

Jack Bailey had found no cottus in the upper river in the past and feels the increased numbers might be associated with a decrease in pollution as they are sensitive to arsenic. With mining closed down on up river mills there is no longer a source of such pollution. I will collect a water sample or two the next time I am over on the Yellowstone and send it in. There are some earlier samples available from the period when the mills were in operation.



Like everyone, Cecil Garland longs for something out of his past—the sorrowful bawl of a long-eared hound.

Letter From a Sportsman

(Cecil Garland, Lincoln Montana)—Photos by author

When I first came to Montana in 1952 it was something like going to heaven, the way some of the old southern preachers used to describe it. I was raised in the Smokey Mountains of North Carolina where big game consisted mostly of grey squirrel, 'possum and 'coon. Here in Montana I could hunt two kinds of deer, and elk at the same time, walk in the tracks of a big grizzly and then the next day drive over to the east side and hunt ringnecks, which I have done. So really, Montana is a sort of heaven for the hunter and the outdoor man.

Now I have never changed my mind about Montana or that it is the best state in the 50 but like everyone I have a longing for something out of my past. That is, I've gotten to where I missed the sorrowful bawl of an old long-eared hound.

After a year or so here I began to hear about lion and cat hunting. Some of my neighbors hunted cats and it sounded like something good to do after the big game season. I picked up two pups—mixed Redbone and a Black and Tan. Now cat hunting is tough and a lot of fun and I have to admit that you have to be

somewhat nuts to want to follow a bunch of hounds after a bobcat on snowshoes all day. Nevertheless, I live from winter to winter and the summers are really too long.

Now comes this bear problem. We have a lot of bear in this state that no one seems to care about hunting very much. And we have a law which states that you cannot hunt them with dogs.

In our store here we sell hunting and fishing licenses and talk to a lot of hunters and only very rarely does one of them say he shot a bear. He might say "I saw a bear up Beaver today" and you ask if he shot him and most likely he'll say "No, I was hunting elk and I don't want to mess with no bear."

The point here is—we in Montana do not hunt our bear. The truth is the bear are very hard to hunt in any way without dogs. If you don't think so, just try going out and stalk a bear as you would a deer or elk.

As a consequence of this lack of bear harvest, in the poor berry years when the food is scarce the bears are forced to more or less unnatural feeding. Bears kill livestock when they might not if their numbers were thinned out. They break into cabins, turn over garbage cans and become scavengers in dumps. Here in Lincoln, marauding bears are becoming more and more of a nuisance and many people are becoming alarmed.

Why, I ask the Montana Fish & Game men, do we not hunt bears in this state with dogs, the only real way to hunt bears? Why, I asked, is there a law against it?

The Fish and Game men all seem to agree that our bear harvest is very poor, that Montana is losing out on a valuable big game sport and that dogs are the best way to hunt bears; but, they say, many sportsmen and sportsmen's groups are against hounds. The sportsmen and their groups seem to feel that the hound-man would want also to run deer and elk with his hounds.

This is where the whole things gets a little funny. If you ever had a deer-running hound, as I have, and turned him loose on a good cat track and then follow him across a mountain or two only to find that he has quit the cat and run a deer then you would understand why any hound-man doesn't want his dogs to run deer. I won't labor the point too much except to say that the last thing I want my dogs to run is a deer and I have spent much time and money breaking my dogs of deer, for if you have a deer-chaser you really don't have a cat or bear dog.

Another objection is that we might interfere with the regular deer and elk season. Here again most of us would not want to run our dogs during the regular big game season because most of us want to hunt deer and elk ourselves. Also the best season to hunt bear is before the regular season because they are fatter and have not begun to den up. September would be fine for bear.

Others say with dogs you would kill off all the bear and cause them to become extinct. Now a hound-man no more wants the bear to become scarce than a fellow with a



Most houndsmen keep their hounds penned up or chained on a wire run.

big game rifle wants the deer or elk to become scarce. Besides all this, the Fish and Game men are certain that they can manage the bear season and harvest and I feel sure they can too. After all, Montana does have almost every other state skinned for big game, birds and fish.

Now you have one other problem that ties in with dogs. You are hearing more and more about coon in this state. More and more farmers and ranchers are having trouble with "bandit eyes." We even hear talk of putting him on the predator list. Now, when I hear this sort of talk I really get scared, for coon hunting is a wonderful sport. Try it sometime if you have the chance. There may be coon very near you and you can't find a hunting sport that a young boy will take to like a blue-tick pup

and a chance to hunt him on coon. Now the same dogs that hunt bear will hunt coon and one sport will stimulate the other.

As for dogs bothering livestock, I'll try to explain that. I think dogs can do, and have done, lots of damage—but are they hunting hounds? Very likely not. Most houndsmen keep their hounds penned up or chained on a wire run. The surest way to ruin a hound would be to let him run loose. A good hound that takes up with bad company does not stay a good hound.

When I exercise my hounds, and I try to about once or twice a week, they run beside my pickup over a neighbor's ranch. I have about eight dogs and not one will leave the road to bark at a cow—also the same with sheep. If I'm called to run a sheep-



Cecil's girls with two of their favorites.

killing bear, my dogs never look at a sheep.

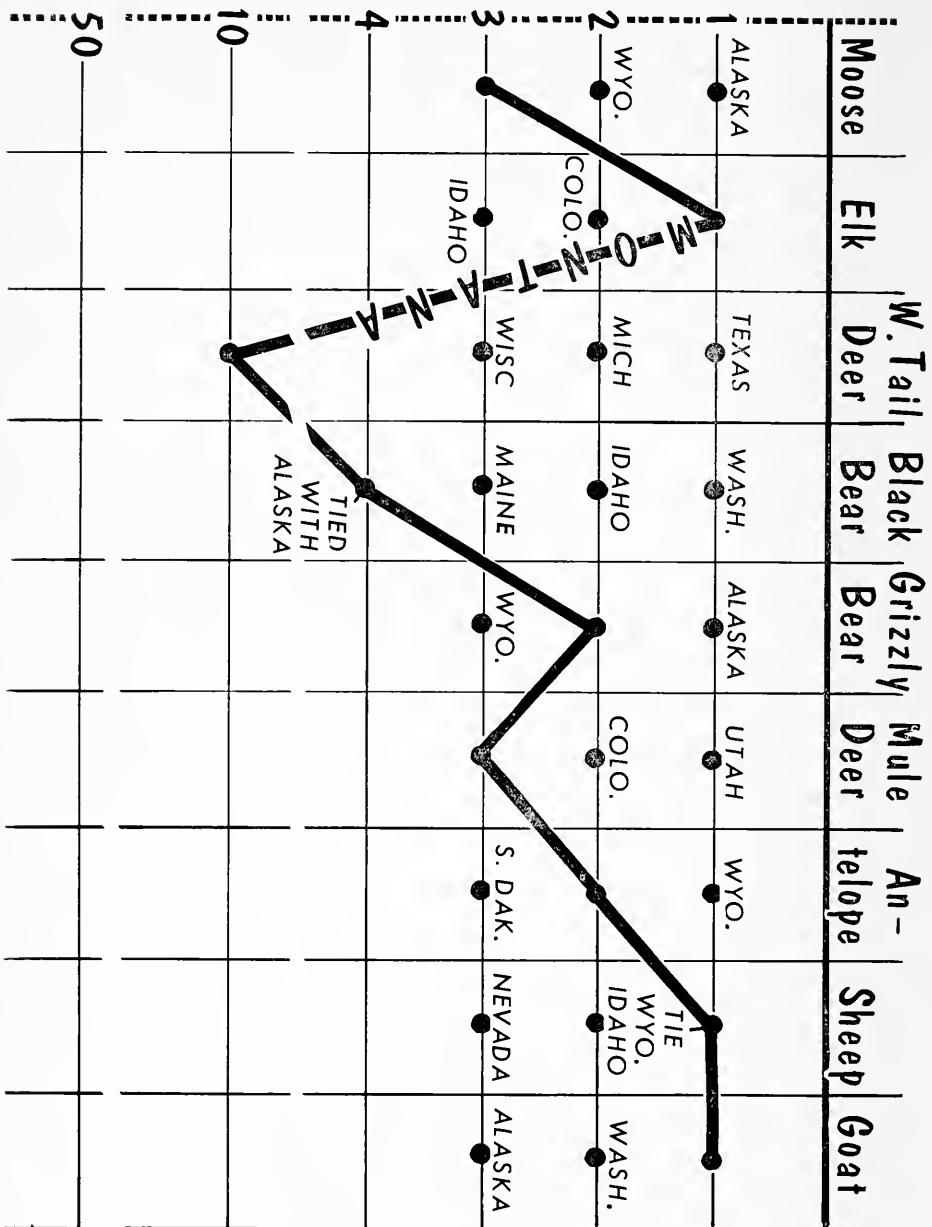
So why not a bear season with hounds? I hear more and more people who are showing concern over the number of bear visits they are receiving. More and more hunters are showing a desire to hunt bear

with dogs. Montana has a lot of bear that could provide another fine chance for outdoor men to be outdoors.

Many other states have had to cope with the problem of marauding bears and the only real solution was to hunt them and to hunt bears means dogs.

In Montana I've met a lot of fine hunters—real outdoor men. I think that a lot of them would sure like to get behind a good bunch of hounds and run, climb and crawl their way through lodgepole and downfall to try to stay within hearing distance of the dogs. You'll darn near kill yourself once you get a taste of it and you and the dogs don't always win. Many a bear has run, fought and ripped up hounds and finally left behind him sore, tired, beat and bleeding dogs and men. Yet once you try it, you'll never get enough hound hunting. It's sure a great sport.

National Standing According to
Game Numbers Taken - 1959 - Season



Prepared from data compiled by the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife.

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